

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for accessing one or more electronic mail (e-mail)
2 messages from among plural e-mail messages, comprising:
3 accessing a database comprising said e-mail messages and lexical elements
4 based on said e-mail messages; and
5 selecting one or more database entries by searching said lexical elements
6 to produce said one or more e-mail messages.

1 2. The method of claim 1 further including receiving a query, said
2 searching being based on said query.

1 3. The method of claim 2 wherein said query is in natural language
2 logic form.

1 4. The method of claim 2 wherein said lexical elements have
2 associated lexical types, said searching being further based on searching said lexical
3 types.

1 5. The method of claim 1 wherein said lexical elements in said
2 database have associated lexical types; the method further including receiving a query and
3 segmenting said query into one or more lexical elements; said searching being based on
4 said lexical elements of said query.

1 6. The method of claim 5 wherein said query is in text-form and said
2 segmenting includes producing plural segments of text and associating each segment of
3 text with a lexical type.

1 7. The method of claim 1 wherein said lexical elements in said
2 database have associated lexical types, the method further including:
3 receiving a query;
4 segmenting said query into one or more lexical elements; and
5 associating each lexical element with a lexical type,
6 said searching being based on matching lexical types in said query with
7 lexical types in said database.

1 8. The method of claim 1 further including converting a voice-based
2 input to a text-based query, said searching being based on said text-based query.

1 9. The method of claim 8 further including converting said one or
2 more e-mail messages to a voice-based output.

1 10. A system for accessing electronic mail (e-mail) messages
2 comprising:
3 an e-mail input module configured to receive input data and to produce an
4 e-mail message comprising a text stream;
5 a text analyzer configured to receive said text stream and to segment said
6 text stream into one or more lexical elements;
7 a data store configured to receive said text stream and to receive said
8 lexical elements;
9 a user input device configured to receive user input and to produce a
10 query; and
11 an output device,
12 said text analyzer further configured to receive said query,
13 said text analyzer further configured to retrieve portions of text contained
14 in said data store based on said query,
15 said text analyzer coupled to said output device to deliver said portions of
16 text.

1 11. The system of claim 10 wherein said text analyzer is further
2 configured to produce objects, each object corresponding to a portion of said text stream,
3 each object having an associated lexical type.

1 12. The system of claim 11 wherein said data store is a relational
2 object oriented database.

1 13. The system of claim 10 wherein said e-mail input module is
2 incorporated in an application program.

1 14. The system of claim 13 wherein said application program is an e-
2 mail reader.

1 15. The system of claim 10 wherein said user input device includes a
2 voice-to-text conversion module, wherein voice input is converted to text to produce said
3 query.

1 16. The system of claim 15 wherein said output device includes a text-
2 to-voice conversion module.

1 17. The system of claim 10 wherein said data store is a relational
2 database.

1 18. The system of claim 10 wherein said text analyzer includes a
2 tokenizer to produce plural segments of text from said text stream and to associate tokens
3 with said segments of text.

1 19. The system of claim 18 wherein said text analyzer further includes
2 a tagger to produce a tagged token by associating a tag with each token.

1 20. The system of claim 19 wherein said text analyzer further includes
2 a stemmer to produce a stem for each said tagged token.

1 21. A method for processing electronic mail (e-mail) messages
2 comprising:
3 receiving an e-mail message comprising text;
4 segmenting said e-mail message into one or more lexical elements;
5 associating each lexical element with a lexical type; and
6 storing said e-mail message and said lexical elements in a database.

1 22. The method of claim 21 further including identifying related
2 categories based on syntactic or semantic information contained in said e-mail messages
3 and associating said related categories to said e-mail messages.

1 23. The method of claim 21 further including repeating the foregoing
2 steps for additional e-mail messages.

1 24. The method of claim 21 wherein said receiving an e-mail includes
2 receiving an e-mail in an application program.

1 25. The method of claim 24 wherein said application program is an e-
2 mail reader.

1 26. The method of claim 21 further including receiving a query and
2 retrieving said lexical elements from said database as a response to said query.

1 27. The method of claim 26 wherein said retrieving said lexical
2 elements includes associating segments of said query with said lexical elements.

1 28. The method of claim 26 wherein said query is a natural language
2 query.

1 29. The method of claim 26 wherein said receiving a query includes
2 receiving voice input and applying voice recognition to said voice input to produce said
3 query.

1 30. The method of claim 29 further including converting said response
2 to voice.

1 31. The method of claim 21 further including forming plural objects,
2 each object being associated with one of said lexical elements.

1 32. The method of claim 31 further including storing said objects in a
2 relational database.

1 33. The method of claim 21 wherein said segmenting includes tagging
2 said lexical elements to produce plural tags, said associating being based on said tags.

1 34. The method of claim 33 wherein said segmenting further includes
2 stemming said lexical elements to produce plural stems, said associating further being
3 based on said stems.

1 35. The method of claim 34 further including tokenizing said text to
2 produce said lexical elements.

1 36. A computer program product for accessing electronic mail (e-mail)
2 messages, the computer program product comprising:
3 code for receiving an e-mail message comprising a text stream;

- 4 code for segmenting said text stream into one or more lexical elements;
- 5 code for storing said text stream and said lexical elements in a database;
- 6 code for receiving a query;
- 7 code for retrieving information from said database based on said query;
- 8 and
- 9 a computer-readable medium for storing said codes.